AMEDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A joint prosthesis system for joining a first bone having a first surface to a second bone having a second surface ~~in a patient~~, comprising:

at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer adapted to be interposed between the first surface and the second surface; and

at least one connector adapted to be fixedly attached to the first bone and the second bone, at least a portion of the at least one connector restricting the lateral movement of said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer ~~the at least one connector connected to the at least one bioabsorbable spacer~~ by contacting the outer surface of the at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer, ~~and disposed to prevent lateral movement of the at least one bioabsorbable spacer~~ the at least one connector comprising autogenous soft or fibrous tissue ~~constructed of the patient's own tissue~~.

2. (Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer is cylindrical.

3. (Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer has a porosity of about 50 μm to 1000 μm.

4. (Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 3, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises a bioabsorbable fabric wrapped to form a cylindrical body.

5. (Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 4, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer further comprises a bioabsorbable film that binds with said bioabsorbable fabric.

6. (Previously Presented) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 5, wherein said bioabsorbable film comprises bioactive components.

7. (Original) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 4, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric is comprised of at least two compounds having different degradation rates in tissue.

8. (Previously Presented) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 4, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric is coated with a material having a degradation rate different than the degradation rate of the bioabsorbable fabric in tissue.

9. (Original) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 7, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric comprises fibers, said fibers comprising a first polymer coated with a second polymer that degrades faster in tissue than said first polymer.

10. (Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises a bioabsorbable fabric comprising bioabsorbable fibers having a thickness of about 1 μm to 300 μm.

11. (Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system of claim 1, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises a bioactive agent.

12. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises a cavity.

13. (Withdrawn) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 12, wherein the surface of said cavity has a coating comprising at least one bioactive agent.

14. (Withdrawn) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said at least one bioactive agent is a bone growth promoting substance.

15. (Withdrawn) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 13, wherein said at least one bioactive agent is hyaline cartilage cells.

16. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises two bioabsorbable polymeric spacers.

17. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 16, wherein at least one of said two bioabsorbable polymeric spacers comprises a cavity.

18. (Withdrawn) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 17, wherein the surface of said cavity has a coating comprising at least one bioactive agent.

19. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 17, wherein the surface of said cavity has a coating comprising hyal[[a]]ine cartilage cells.

20. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises two bioabsorbable polymeric spacers, each of said two bioabsorbable polymeric spacers having a first side adapted to contact a bone and having a second side adapted to contact the other one of said two bioabsorbable polymeric spacers.

21. (Withdrawn) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 20, wherein the first side has a first coating comprising a bioactive agent to promote bone growth, and said second side has a second coating comprising a bioactive agent to promote cartilage growth.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a joint injury ~~in a patient~~ comprising the steps of:

providing at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer;

interposing said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer between a first bone and a second bone;

connecting said first bone to said second bone with at least one connector such that at least part of said at least one connector restricts the lateral movement of said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer ~~is contacting connected to the at least one bioabsorbable spacer~~ by contacting the outer surface of said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer, ~~thereby restricting the lateral movement of said at least one bioabsorbable spacer~~ the at least one connector comprising autogenous soft or fibrous tissue ~~constructed of the patient's own tissue~~.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer is cylindrical.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer has a porosity of about 50 μm to 1000 μm.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises a bioabsorbable fabric wrapped to form a cylindrical body.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer further comprises a bioabsorbable film that binds with said bioabsorbable fabric.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein said bioabsorbable film includes bioactive components.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric comprises at least two compounds having different degradation rates in tissue.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric is coated with a material having a degradation rate different than the degradation rate of the bioabsorbable fabric in tissue.

31. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein said bioabsorbable fabric comprises fibers, said fibers comprising a first polymer coated with a second polymer that degrades faster in tissue than said first polymer.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises a bioabsorbable fabric comprising bioabsorbable fibers having a thickness of about 1 μm to 300 μm.

33. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises a cavity.

34. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein the at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises ~~a~~ first and second bioabsorbable polymeric spacers and wherein interposing said at least one bioabsorbable polymeric spacer comprises interposing the first bioabsorbable polymeric spacer between the first bone and the second bioabsorbable polymeric spacer, and interposing the second bioabsorbable polymeric spacer between the first bioabsorbable polymeric spacer and the second bone.

35. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method of claim 34, wherein at least one of said first and second bioabsorbable polymeric spacers comprises a cavity.

36. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system of claim 16, wherein surfaces of the two bioabsorbable polymeric spacers mutually define a cavity.

37. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The method of claim 34, wherein surfaces of the two bioabsorbable polymeric spacers mutually define a cavity.

38. (Previously Presented) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 1, wherein the at least one connector comprises two connectors.

39. (Currently Amended) The joint prosthesis system as set forth in claim 38, wherein the two connectors each comprise autogenous soft or fibrous tissue~~the patient's own tissue~~.